

# **NORTH CAROLINA SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES JULY 21, 2011**

The seventh meeting of the Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council (Council) was held July 21, 2011, at the Martin Building on the NC State Fairgrounds in Raleigh, NC. Council Chair, Commissioner Steve Troxler, opened the meeting at 1:04 pm.

## **MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr. Jamie Ager  
Dr. Alice Ammerman  
Mr. Uli Bennewitz  
Dr. Nancy Creamer  
Mr. John Day  
Dr. Jeffrey Engel  
Ms. Debbie Hamrick  
Ms. Linda Harris

Dr. Lynn Harvey  
Ms. Savonala Horne  
Rev. Mac Legerton  
Mr. Roland McReynolds  
Ms. Earline Middleton  
Commissioner Steve Troxler  
Dr. Joseph Zublena

## **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr. Tim Gravely was in attendance for Secretary Keith Crisco  
Ms. Emily Jackson was in attendance for Mr. Charlie Jackson

## **ABSENT MEMBERS**

Mr. Ted Burch  
Secretary Keith Crisco  
Mr. Billy Ray Hall  
Ms. Jane Iseley  
Mr. Charlie Jackson  
Mr. Phil Hudson

Mr. Barry Nash  
Mr. Randall Patterson  
Mr. Willy Phillips  
Mr. Tommy Porter, Jr.  
Ms. LaTisha Watford

## **OPENING COMMENTS**

Commissioner Troxler welcomed the Council as well as those in attendance. He gave an update that most farmers in North Carolina had been adversely affected by the lack of rainfall. Each week, a North Carolina Crops and Weather Report is issued by the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service NC Field Office. The latest report indicated that 60% of the cotton was classified as either good or excellent. Last year, rain late in the growing season saved the sweetpotato crop in the eastern part of the state.

In addition to dry conditions, areas east of I-95 have experienced bad wildfires. The NC Forest Service transferred from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources effective July 1, 2011. This has been the worst fire season in approximately 30 years and most have been in peat moss where they cannot be extinguished, only contained.

# **NORTH CAROLINA SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD**

## **ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES**

### **JULY 21, 2011**

The Agriculture Water Use Survey has been completed, with a 92% farmer return rate. The conclusion of this survey was that agricultural water use accounts for less than 1% of daily water withdraws.

The NC Department of Agriculture Food and Drug Division recently received the Elliot O. Grovensor Food Safety Award from The Association of Food and Drug Officials. North Carolina is the first state to receive this honor, which recognizes outstanding achievement by food safety programs within state departments of agriculture, natural resources, public health or environmental health.

Additionally, this is a busy time of year for the Farmers Markets with local produce and products available.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Debbie Hamrick made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 28, 2011, meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Joe Zublena. The minutes were unanimously approved.

#### **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Mr. Ray Starling and Ms. Joy Hicks, NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, led the Council in an update regarding the recent legislative session impacts on the agriculture community.

Discussion was held around the legislation regarding the Council and the July 31, 2012, expiration of the statute. Specific items addressed included extending the sunset date, requesting funding for the Council, and updating the membership list since the Farm Transition Network no longer is in existence. Mr. Dan Gerlach was recognized and thanked for the Golden Leaf Foundation's funding of the Council.

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND DISCUSSION**

##### **Economic Development and Infrastructure**

Ms. Debbie Hamrick, Chair of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee, shared an update from the committee. Items discussed included conducting a statewide local foods assessment and evaluation of the NC egg law, including legislative listening sessions.

Mr. Roland McReynolds then presented information regarding proposed rule changes impacting Farm Credit Administration that may have impacts on local foods. A copy of the letter sent by Carolina Farm Stewardship Association was shared with the Council.

# **NORTH CAROLINA SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES JULY 21, 2011**

## **Health, Wellness, Hunger and Food Access**

Dr. Alice Ammerman, Chair of the Health, Wellness, Hunger and Food Access Subcommittee, presented draft recommendations from the subcommittee.

Items included were as follows:

- The exploration of an interagency collaboration to evaluate the use of school garden foods in schools (approved by Council at the April 2011 meeting;)
- Efforts to streamline and facilitate GAP certification procedures so that more farmers can participate in Farm to School and other marketing opportunities requiring this certification;
- Explore opportunities and funding to develop and tests a variety of local food aggregation and distribution systems (including gleaning) that increase affordable access to healthy food in lower income communities and create new market opportunities for local farmers;
- Efforts to increase the number of schools participating in the NCDA&CS Farm to School program by increasing awareness of the program and reducing barriers to participation; and
- Explore opportunities and challenges for expanding USDA benefit programs at farmers markets and roadside stands.

## **Land, People, and Natural Resources**

The Subcommittee Chair, Mr. John Day, presented recommendations for the 2011 Annual Report from the committee. Highlighted points include:

- Increase institutional purchasing of local food by adopting legislation encouraging purchase of local foods;
- Establish a consumer education program aimed at households and institutional buyers that addresses supporting local food;
- Research and document existing local and regional processing and aggregation infrastructure;
- Research and document existing infrastructure or programs for producer cooperative purchasing, processing, distribution, excreta, and explore additional opportunities;
- Issues regarding farm labor;
- Increase access to and availability of capital for agriculture-related businesses;
- Eliminate unnecessary regulations and record-keeping requirements;
- Government should indemnify farmers for losses due to food safety recalls where the producer wasn't at fault and can show how they suffered economic losses;
- Enact legislation ensuring public and private utility extensions minimize negative impacts on agricultural land.
- Enact legislation protecting farmland in condemnation proceedings; and
- Evaluate current requirements for participation in the present use value program and explore opportunities to encourage and support non-traditional agriculture.

# **NORTH CAROLINA SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD**

## **ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES**

### **JULY 21, 2011**

Commissioner Troxler encouraged Committees to categorize and narrow down their recommendations to very specific items based on state, local and federal components. The Council will need to be prepared for a full discussion on items for the 2011 Annual Report at the September meeting. Ms. Joy Hicks suggested that committees meet in August and be ready to identify recommendations with a time frame for completion and responsible person identified. Ms. Hicks also encouraged that recommendations be achievable actions for the Council to complete in the year ahead.

#### **NC EGG LAW**

The Council heard from the following individuals regarding the NC Egg Law:

- Ms. Suzanne Nelson provided information from the perspective of a small producer;
- Mr. Jim Melvin, NCDA&CS, provided information regarding the background of the NC Egg Law and current regulations; and
- Ms. Jan Kelly, Executive Director of the NC Egg Association, introduced Dr. Ken Anderson, NC State Poultry Extension, who addressed egg production human health concerns, and the production inspection processes.

#### **FARM TO SCHOOL SURVEY AND UPDATE**

The Council heard from Mr. Gary Gay and Ms. Heather Barnes, NCDA&CS, regarding the NC Farm to School program. Highlights include:

- In fiscal year 2010-2011, the Farm to School program distributed \$985,000 in North Carolina produce. This was a \$100,000 increase over the previous year. Seventy nine schools systems participated, up from 61 the previous year.
- In the upcoming school year, Farm to School produce will be offered for 20 weeks. This will include expanding the season by two weeks in July and one in August.
- NCDA&CS Farm to School Program received a \$1.2 million grant from BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina Foundation to purchase additional refrigerated tractor trailers and market the program.
- The NCDA&CS Food Distribution Division distributed \$66 million in USDA commodities last year from the Salisbury and Butner facilities. Much of this food goes into the hunger network. Only three other states have distribution facilities.
- The results of the School Nutrition Survey assessment of the Farm to School program were sent to all 117 Child Nutrition Directors in the state. There was a response rate of 59%. Barriers to participation identified included storage, staff, warehouse space, and storing a weeks worth of produce at one time.

#### **NC CAPITAL ACCESS PROGRAM (NC-CAP)**

Mr. Tom Wall, Associate Director of the NC Rural Center, presented information to the Council regarding the NC-CAP program. Highlights include that NC-CAP will work with banks and other financial institutions to create capital opportunities for entrepreneurs who may not otherwise qualify for financing. This program is administered by the NC Rural Center and was modeled after the 1994-2007 NC-CAP. There are fifty six banks participating in the program

**NORTH CAROLINA SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD  
ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES  
JULY 21, 2011**

and North Carolina companies with up to 500 employees are eligible for funding, including non-profits. The program will make capital available to small businesses, including farmers.

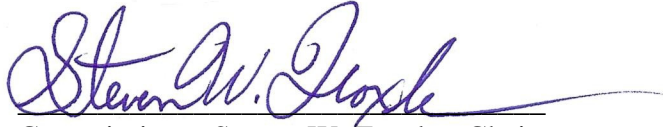
**OTHER**

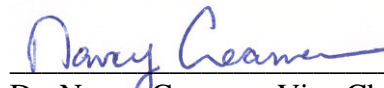
The next Council meeting will be September 22, 2011. The purpose of the meeting will be to finalize and vote on the 2011 Annual Report.

Ms. Debbie Hamrick made a motion to close the meeting, which was seconded by Ms. Earline Middleton and passed unanimously. The Council meeting adjourned at 4:14 pm.

Prepared by:  
Elizabeth P. Farrell  
Administrative Assistant, NCDA&CS

Adopted by the Council this 22nd day  
of September 2011

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner Steven W. Troxler, Chair  
Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Nancy Creamer, Vice Chair  
Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council